



# ***Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks***

Wildlife Division  
PO Box 200701  
1420 East 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Helena MT 59620-0701  
August 14, 2009

Dear Interested Person:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) is requesting public comment on the draft Montana Bighorn Sheep Conservation Strategy. Any final adoption of this strategy will take place at the November 2009 FWP Commission meeting.

## **MONTANA BIGHORN SHEEP CONSERVATION STRATEGY**

The Wildlife Bureau of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has recently completed a draft of the Montana Bighorn Sheep Conservation Strategy. This first-ever comprehensive plan for managing one of the state's premier big game species will be out for public review and comment for 46 calendar days, from August 14 through September 28. This Conservation Strategy documents the history of bighorns in Montana and defines future management direction for this publicly highlighted big game species.

The document is divided into two chapters. Chapter 1 provides a history of past and current management of bighorn sheep in Montana plus overall direction for future management. Subsections in this chapter provide overall direction on how populations, transplants, herd health and habitat will be monitored and managed.

Chapter 2 contains individual management plans for bighorn populations in each of Montana's bighorn sheep hunting districts as well as five small populations that are not currently hunted. Each individual management plan contains a comprehensive history of the population, objectives for habitat and population objectives and strategies for meeting those objectives. The objectives for each population of bighorns will direct the future management of the species in that area.

To provide overall direction for bighorn sheep management in Montana, eight Statewide Objectives have been developed. These include attempting to manage existing populations at objectives as outlined in Chapter 2 and evaluating the possibility of establishing five new viable and huntable populations over the course of the next 10 years.

The Conservation Strategy is intended to provide management guidance for bighorns for at least the next 10 years. It is intended to be flexible and incorporate new ideas, technological and scientific advances, and adapt management efforts to changes in bighorn populations and their habitats as they occur. Ultimately, this document will assist biologists in making decisions regarding the management of particular populations, provide direction to other agencies relative to their management efforts that may affect bighorn sheep and aide the FWP Commission in their decisions regarding bighorn sheep in Montana.

The Montana Bighorn Sheep Conservation Strategy can be viewed online at <http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/bighornplan.html>. To receive a CD of the conservation plan, contact the FWP Wildlife office by telephone: 406-444-2612, by email: [fwpwld@mt.gov](mailto:fwpwld@mt.gov), or through the USPS: FWP, Wildlife Division, POB 200701, Helena, MT 59620-0701.

Public comment will be taken for 46 calendar days, August 14 through September 28. Submit comments electronically at:

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=7cyWzwELEilcbxlxxkFrjA\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=7cyWzwELEilcbxlxxkFrjA_3d_3d)

Comments can also be submitted through the USPS at: FWP – Wildlife Division, Attn: Public Comment, POB 200701, Helena MT 59620-0701.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kenneth P. McDonald".

Ken McDonald  
Wildlife Bureau Chief